

**Preliminary Amendment of U.S. National Stage for International Application
PCT/EP03/03433 filed April 2, 2003**

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-7, without prejudice, and add new claims 8-27, in accordance with the following complete listing of all claims ever presented. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the instant application:

Claims 1-7 (Canceled)

Claim 8 (New): A process for separating a supercritical or near-critical mixture which comprises hydrogen, a solvent gas, methanol and a fatty alcohol under an initial pressure of from 100 to 300 bar, said process comprising:

(a) reducing the pressure of the mixture in a first stage to a pressure of from 50 to 150 bar to form a first recycle gas and a first partially-separated intermediate mixture, wherein the reduced pressure in the first stage is at least below the initial pressure;

(b) reducing the pressure of the first partially-separated intermediate mixture in a second stage to a pressure of from 10 to 50 bar to form a second recycle gas and a second partially-separated intermediate mixture; and

(c) reducing the pressure of the second partially-separated intermediate mixture in a third stage to a pressure of from 1 to 10 bar to form a third recycle gas and a fatty alcohol product.

Claim 9 (New): The process according to claim 8, wherein the supercritical or near-critical mixture is a product of fatty acid methyl ester hydrogenation for the production of fatty alcohols.

Claim 10 (New): The process according to claim 8, wherein the solvent gas comprises propane.

Claim 11 (New): The process according to claim 9, wherein the solvent gas comprises propane.

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Claim 12 (New): The process according to claim 8, wherein the supercritical or near-critical mixture comprises a fatty alcohol in an amount of from 1 to 4 mole percent.

Claim 13 (New): The process according to claim 9, wherein the supercritical or near-critical mixture comprises a fatty alcohol in an amount of from 1 to 4 mole percent.

Claim 14 (New): The process according to claim 10, wherein the supercritical or near-critical mixture comprises a fatty alcohol in an amount of from 1 to 4 mole percent.

Claim 15 (New): The process according to claim 8, wherein the supercritical or near-critical mixture comprises hydrogen in an amount of from 10 to 20 mole percent.

Claim 16 (New): The process according to claim 9, wherein the supercritical or near-critical mixture comprises hydrogen in an amount of from 10 to 20 mole percent.

Claim 17 (New): The process according to claim 10, wherein the supercritical or near-critical mixture comprises hydrogen in an amount of from 10 to 20 mole percent.

Claim 18 (New): The process according to claim 12, wherein the supercritical or near-critical mixture comprises hydrogen in an amount of from 10 to 20 mole percent.

Claim 19 (New): The process according to claim 8, wherein one or more of the first, second and third recycle gases comprises a portion of the solvent gas and excess hydrogen.

Claim 20 (New): The process according to claim 8, wherein one or more of the first, second and third recycle gases comprises methanol in an amount of up to 5 mole percent.

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Claim 21 (New): The process according to claim 19, wherein one or more of the first, second and third recycle gases comprises methanol in an amount of up to 5 mole percent.

Claim 22 (New): The process according to claim 9, wherein one or more of the first, second and third recycle gases comprises a portion of the solvent gas and excess hydrogen.

Claim 23 (New): The process according to claim 9, wherein one or more of the first, second and third recycle gases comprises methanol in an amount of up to 5 mole percent.

Claim 24 (New): The process according to claim 22, wherein one or more of the first, second and third recycle gases comprises methanol in an amount of up to 5 mole percent.

Claim 25 (New): The process according to claim 10, wherein one or more of the first, second and third recycle gases comprises a portion of the solvent gas and excess hydrogen.

Claim 26 (New): The process according to claim 10, wherein one or more of the first, second and third recycle gases comprises methanol in an amount of up to 5 mole percent.

Claim 27 (New): The process according to claim 25, wherein one or more of the first, second and third recycle gases comprises methanol in an amount of up to 5 mole percent.